**Doubling of bilateral trade by India and America**

†*313. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that due to the failure of most of the world-level talks under World Trade Organisation, India and America have decided to double the present level of foreign trade by the year 2008 in the bilateral talks;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) whether those industries where trade is to be increased, have been identified; and

(d) if so, the names of such industries and the target set for increasing the trade of agricultural products?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) to (d) Discussions on the expansion of India-US bilateral trade are held independent of the outcome of multilateral talks under the WTO. The India-US Trade Policy Forum, which had its first meeting in New Delhi on November 12, 2005, has been designed to act as a forum for taking up issues relating to the expansion of bilateral trade and investment relations between India and the United States. Tariff and non-tariff barriers, agriculture, investment, services, intellectual property and the Doha Round were taken up for discussion during the meeting of the Forum. A doubling of bilateral trade in about three years' time was also discussed. However, no specific industry- wise targets have been set for increasing bilateral trade.

**Setting up an inter-State Secretary level advisory group to frame the guidelines for NEG Act**

*314. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government has announced the setting up of an inter-State Secretary level advisory group to frame the guidelines for National Employment Guarantee Act;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether this move will bring some transparency and how it will function; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) In a meeting with the State Ministers for Rural Development/Panchayati Raj held in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on 27th September, 2005, in the context of NREG Act, 2005, it was decided that an Advisory Group of Secretaries of Rural Development be set up to frame the guidelines for National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. Accordingly, an Advisory Group comprising State Rural Development/ Panchayati Raj Secretaries from 10 selected States namely Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Orissa, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh has been constituted under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Rural Development, Government of India.

(c) and (d) Three meetings of the Advisory Group have been held on 7th October, 18th October and 22nd November, 2005 wherein the draft guidelines have been thoroughly discussed. The Ministry of Rural Development has also held wide discussions with eminent persons and non-governmental organisations with a view to bringing transparency in the guidelines for the implementation of NREG Act. The measures for bringing in transparency as provided in the Act have been emphasized in the draft guidelines. These include participation of Gram Sabha in planning for works, social audit by Gram Sabha, monitoring and evaluation system at State and Central level, grievance redressal mechanism, display of muster rolls on the Notice Boards of implementing agencies and applicability of right to information to every aspect of NREG Act.

**Plans to have Rapid Deployment Force to protect Indian interests**

*315. DR. KARAN SINGH:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether seas surrounding India are gaining strategic importance with global focus shifting to Indian Ocean and Indian defence planners